

REGULATION MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: IFA, IFA-RA, IKA, IKB-RA, IKC-RA, ISB-RA, JEA-RA, KBA-RA
Responsible Office: Chief Academic Officer

Grading and Reporting

I. PURPOSE

To align grading and reporting practices with the curriculum and assessment practices of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and the State of Maryland in order to accurately document and report student achievement

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Assessments* include, but are not limited to, districtwide assessments, end of unit tests, final evaluations, projects, performance-based assessments, and other similar formative and summative demonstrations of a student's mastery of grade level or course material.
- B. *Body of evidence* is a collection of aligned instructional tasks used to determine if a student has met identified standards or goals.
- C. *Course expectations* are statements of skills and knowledge the student should attain by the end of a course.
- D. *Course team* is all teachers in a school who teach the same course.
- E. *Grade level expectations* are statements of skills and knowledge that elementary students should attain in a subject by the end of a grade—what an elementary student is expected to know and be able to do by the end of a grade level in a specific subject, as outlined in the grade/subject curriculum.
- F. *Marking period* is an approximately nine-week period, or quarter of a school year, at the end of which individual student's achievement of the concepts and skills taught during that period is reported.
- G. *Semester* is a term typically used only for high school level courses, and refers to an approximately 18-week period comprised of two nine-week marking periods, or

quarters of a school year, at the end of which individual student's achievement of the concepts and skills taught during that period is reported.

- H. *Special populations* are groups of students who may require instructional adjustments, accommodations, or modifications to their instructional programs based on learning needs and strengths.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Evidence of Student Learning

Consistent with MCPS Regulation IFA-RA, *Curriculum*, teachers will use a variety of assessment approaches over time to create a body of evidence and monitor student learning of the MCPS curriculum. Student grades are based on the collected body of evidence.

1. The body of evidence may include assessment products such as unit assessments, papers, projects, quizzes or tests, and/or performance tasks.
2. The body of evidence may not include work assigned for practice or preparation for instruction, except as described in MCPS Regulation IKB-RA, *Homework Procedures*, and in grading and reporting procedures published on the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP) website.

B. Grades

1. Grades must be based on individual demonstration of skill and understanding.
2. Grades for elementary content areas are based on evidence of the attainment of assigned grade level or course expectations.
3. Grades for middle and high school courses are based on evidence of attainment of course expectations.
4. Grade level and course expectations are outlined in curriculum documents and discussed in section III.D.
5. Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), special educators, and general education teachers who provide instruction for a student will collaboratively examine evidence collected to determine a student's grade.
6. Attendance and tardiness are not calculated in the grade. In high school, school staff will follow procedures outlined in MCPS Regulation JEA-RA, *Student Attendance*.

7. Permissible grade symbols and scales used on report cards are set forth in grading and reporting procedures published on the OCIP website.

C. Reporting Student Achievement

1. Report Cards

- a) Report cards summarize evidence of student achievement collected throughout the marking period and include the following:

- (1) Grades, consistent with the required grading scale, indicating student achievement on grade level/course expectations;
- (2) Attendance, consistent with MCPS Regulation JEA-RA, *Student Attendance*; and
- (3) Students' Learning Skills for students in kindergarten through Grade 8.

- b) Parents/guardians of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) will receive supplemental information on progress toward the attainment of IEP goals at the time report cards are issued, consistent with federal and state requirements.

- c) At the elementary level, report cards indicate adjustments to grade level expectations.

- (1) The report card will reflect the student's actual instructional level and achievement of assigned indicators in reading and math.

- (2) Parents/guardians of ESOL students will receive supplemental information on their student's performance in listening, speaking, reading, and writing based on expectations that are appropriate to their English language proficiency level.

2. Formal reporting varies by grade level as follows:

- a) Prekindergarten teachers report student achievement to parents/guardians in parent conferences and narrative reports.

- b) Reporting for Grades K–5 is as follows:
 - (1) Report cards for students in Grades K–5 are issued at the end of each marking period.
 - (2) In Grades K–5, one parent/teacher conference is required during the first semester. Additional parent/teacher conferences are recommended for students who are not meeting or who are exceeding expectations.
- c) Reporting for middle and high schools is as follows:
 - (1) Report cards for students in Grades 6–12 are issued at the end of each marking period.
 - (2) Interim reports may be sent for all students but must be sent to the parent/guardian of each student who is in danger of failing or of dropping more than one letter grade from the previous marking period.
 - (3) Interim reports are sent between the fourth and sixth weeks of the marking period. If a student shows a marked decline in achievement later in the marking period, the teacher must inform the parent/guardian of this decline.
 - (4) Parent/teacher conferences are encouraged when a student is in danger of failing or of dropping more than one letter grade from the previous marking period.
- 3. Teachers are encouraged to communicate informally with the parent/guardian via phone calls, e-mails or password-protected sites on the MCPS website.
- 4. Teachers or parents/guardians may request additional conferences as needed to discuss student progress or concerns.
- 5. Teachers will use an electronic grade book and classroom-to-home communication systems selected, deployed and supported by the Office of the Chief Technology Officer in accordance with grading and reporting procedures published on the OCIP website.

D. Grade Level and Course Expectations

OCIP is responsible for developing curricula consistent with MCPS Regulation IFA-RA, *Curriculum*, that establish grade level expectations at the elementary level and course expectations at the middle and high school levels aligned with Maryland

State Department of Education standards and assessments or other nationally or internationally recognized standards.

1. All students will be considered diploma bound and will be assessed and graded accordingly unless and until an IEP team determines that a student will be instructed, assessed, and graded on Alternative Learning Outcomes that are aligned with Curriculum 2.0, leading to a Certificate of Completion. Such a determination requires written consent from the parent/guardian except as otherwise provided in Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 8-405(f).
2. Procedures for adjusting assigned curricula for elementary students not on grade level will be developed by OCIP, in collaboration with the Office of Special Education and the Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement, and approved by the chief academic officer.

E. School Procedures

1. The Office of School Support and Improvement and OCIP will collaboratively implement procedures established by the chief academic officer to monitor implementation of Board of Education Policy IKA, *Grading and Reporting*, including review and/or change of grades.
2. Principals are responsible for the following:
 - a) Ensuring that grading and reporting procedures are applied consistently within their school. The principal designates the school leadership team to assist in developing and monitoring school level grading and reporting processes including:
 - (1) The principal or designee may require consistent processes throughout the school; but
 - (2) Grade level or course teams or departments must establish consistent grading processes as described in E.3 below.
 - b) Reviewing grading and reporting procedures with staff during pre-service days;
 - c) Communicating grading and reporting information in writing to parents/guardians at the beginning of each semester or when procedures change;
 - d) Designating a staff member to serve as the school contact for grading and reporting concerns and communicating the name of the contact to students, staff, parents/guardians, and OCIP at the

beginning of each school year. The staff contact is responsible for facilitating communication and providing a timely response to grading and reporting questions as follows:

- (1) Redirecting questions to appropriate school staff members when questions are specific to an individual student's grade;
 - (2) Informing the principal or designee of recurring questions, and questions about policy and procedures; and
 - (3) Forwarding unanswered or recurring questions to OCIP.
3. Grade level or course team teachers are responsible for collaborating to establish consistency among the following:
- a) The body of evidence upon which students' grades are based;
 - b) Weighting of assessments, if appropriate;
 - c) The method and schedule for reteaching and reassessment opportunities as described in Section III.F.3 below;
 - d) The extent to which homework counts toward the marking period grade in middle and high school courses, consistent with MCPS Regulation IKB-RA, *Homework Procedures*, and grading and reporting procedures published on the OCIP website;
 - e) Due dates, deadlines, and late work procedures in middle and high school courses in accordance with grading and reporting procedures published on the OCIP website.
4. Teachers are responsible for the following:
- a) Communicating expectations in writing for each course, subject, or grade level to students and parents/guardians;
 - b) Returning graded work to students as described in Section III.I.;
 - c) Allowing makeup work, regardless of the reason for the student's absence. Teachers may assign an equivalent, but different task or assessment to students when they return from any absence. For unlawful absences, teachers may deny credit for missed assignments or assessments in accordance with the process approved by the principal and the leadership team; and

- d) Using grade scales, which may include letters, numbers or symbols, as approved by the chief academic officer.

5. The following grading practices are prohibited:

- a) Awarding extra credit and/or bonus points;
- b) Forcing grades into a normal frequency distribution or any other kind of curve that compares students in relation to others;
- c) Establishing rating scales that compare students in relation to others (sliding scales are not permitted);
- d) Assigning a grade lower than 50 percent to a task/assessment. However, if a student does no work on the task/assessment, the teacher will assign a zero. If a teacher determines the student did not attempt to meet the basic requirements of the task/assessment or the student engaged in academic dishonesty, the teacher may assign a zero; or
- e) Assigning any single task/assessment that counts more than 25 percent of the marking period grade.

F. Pre-assessment, Formative Assessment, Summative Assessment, and Reassessment

1. Pre-assessments are designed to determine what students know and can do in order to plan instruction.
 - a) Pre-assessments are administered before instruction and may include teacher- and system-designed assessments.
 - b) Pre-assessments may be recorded but cannot be used in the body of evidence to determine a student's marking period or final grade.
2. Formative assessments are used during the course of instruction and measure student mastery of specific indicators aligned to standards. Formative assessments are used by teachers to inform and guide subsequent instruction and may be included in the body of evidence.
3. Summative assessments determine whether students understand and can apply what has been taught; provide students the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge/skills they have had time to practice; are based on known criteria; focus primarily on individual student performance; and integrate important skills and knowledge.

- a) Summative assessments may take the form of teacher- or system-designed examinations, papers, projects, and/or performance tasks.
- b) Except as specified below, grade level or course teams establish weighting of assessments and reassessment procedures.

4. Reassessment

Elementary and secondary students are provided opportunities for reassessments after reteaching in accordance with grading and reporting procedures published on the OCIP website.

G. Districtwide Assessments

Required assessments administered districtwide are one component of the body of evidence.

- 1. A districtwide assessment is required to be given at designated times in identified grade levels and identified middle and high school courses.
- 2. In middle and high school courses for which there are districtwide assessments, selected assessments may be calculated as 10 percent of the marking period grade, as directed by OCIP.

H. Final Evaluations for Seniors

- 1. Seniors enrolled in English, ESOL, information technology/computer science, mathematics, science, social studies, and world languages courses are required to complete a culminating summative assessment, which may be the districtwide assessment in some cases.
- 2. Grades for final evaluations for high school seniors are calculated into the fourth marking period average and count for 10 percent of the fourth marking period grade.

I. Return of Graded Work

- 1. Graded work should be returned to students as soon as it is feasible.
- 2. When tests are computer scored or have answer sheets separate from test questions, students must have an opportunity to review their answers with test questions in hand. This shall not be construed so as to require teachers to return all quizzes and tests permanently as specified below.

3. Students may retain graded work for their own later review and are encouraged to take work home to share with their parents/guardians, including marking period assessments. Exceptions are noted below:
 - a) In certain cases, teachers may retain items of an assessment to protect copyright permissions or to maintain the security of items; or when assessment items are administered through an online platform, and it is not feasible to redistribute them in other formats.
 - b) Teachers may temporarily retain graded work for review with parents/guardians, as is common practice in elementary schools, or may temporarily retain selected work for portfolio entry, as is the practice in some classes such as art and English
4. Upon request by individual parents/guardians, teachers will make available to parents/guardians tests and quizzes given during the course or marking period so that parents/guardians can review student progress. The intention of returning graded work is to promote transparency in assessment and provide individual feedback; however, this must be balanced with maintaining the security of assessment items. Therefore, students and parents/guardians are expected not to share, or otherwise distribute, information contained on assessments or other graded work.

Related Sources:

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 34 CFR Section 300.320; *Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article §8-405(f); *Code of Maryland Regulations* §13A.05.01.09(B)

Regulation History: Formerly Regulation No. 3554, October 30, 1981; revised December 1986; revised June 10, 1988; revised November 2, 1993; revised October 1, 1996; revised August 5, 2008; revised May 12, 2010; revised June 27, 2016; revised June 28, 2017.